

Lieutenant Governor Garamendi Urges Strong Coastal Protection at President's Ocean Policy Task Force Public Meeting

Garamendi Urges Federal Moratorium on Offshore Oil Drilling, Action on Ocean Debris

SAN FRANCISCO – Lieutenant Governor John Garamendi today delivered opening remarks urging a federal moratorium on offshore oil drilling and requesting assistance to combat marine debris at President Barack Obama's Ocean Policy Task Force public meeting in San Francisco. The Lt. Governor also submitted [prepared testimony](#).

"Today, I call on the Ocean Policy Task Force and President Obama to recommend to the relevant authorities in Washington continuation of California's 40 year moratorium on oil drilling in the Pacific Ocean," said Garamendi, who chairs the California State Lands Commission. "The potential environmental and economic devastation of new oil and gas leasing to the eighth largest global economy is not worth the risk and completely contradicts California's efforts to expand renewable and alternative energy resources."

In January, the State Lands Commission rejected what would have been the first new offshore oil drilling lease in more than 40 years. When Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger attempted to bypass the authority of the State Lands Commission and push the oil lease through the Legislature this summer, the California State Assembly rejected the proposal by a 28-43 vote. President George Bush allowed the federal moratorium on offshore oil drilling to lapse, and Garamendi supports reinstating it.

"We also welcome federal action to deal with these ongoing problems and look forward to continuing a statewide and national dialogue on the importance of protecting our fragile coasts," added Garamendi, a member of the California Ocean Protection Council. "Federal assistance to promote recycling and reduce plastics would go a long way to protecting our oceans."

80 percent of marine debris comes from land-based sources, particularly trash and plastic litter in urban runoff. In November 2008, the Ocean Protection Council released a report, ["An Implementation Strategy for the California Ocean Protection Council Resolution to Reduce and Prevent Ocean Litter,"](#)

outlining key legislative priorities to reduce marine debris that has a detrimental impact on California beaches, ocean water quality, and wildlife.

In 2008, Garamendi founded the [Clean Seas Coalition](#), a diverse coalition of environmentalists, scientists, students, community leaders, and elected officials, in 2008, to help usher [priority legislation](#) through the legislative process. The Coalition is hopeful it will get bills on the Governor's desk next year.

Garamendi's accomplished environmental record includes:

- As chairman, Garamendi led the State Lands Commission to reject the proposed Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminal off the Oxnard/Malibu coast, highlighting the plan's deficiencies in protecting the environmental health of the communities, the ocean and coastline.
- As a member of the Ocean Protection Council, Garamendi developed a plan & championed legislation (Pacific Protection Initiative; 5 marine debris bills to reduce ocean pollution) to greatly decrease pollution of California beaches from plastic refuse, reducing the danger to California's beaches and marine life.
- As Deputy Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior, Garamendi oversaw the Department's eight bureaus and helped develop national global warming policy with Vice President Al Gore and Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt. He also was the key negotiator for water disputes throughout California and brought the Riverside Habitat Conservation Plan to successful implementation, which protected 66,000 acres of rare habitat. It is a national model.
- As a California legislator, Garamendi authored the Tahoe Bond Act (1982), allowing the State to acquire and preserve private land in the Tahoe Basin. Since then, he has continued to help lead the state's efforts to protect the quality and clarity of Lake Tahoe's water, shore zone, natural habitat, and regional development activities.
- Garamendi's 32 years of public service and environmental leadership was recently recognized by leading California coastal advocates:
 - Environmental Defense Center (Environmental Hero Award, June 2008)
 - San Diego Coast Keeper (2007 Coastal Champion Award, November 2007)
 - The California Coastal Coalition & the Wetlands Recovery Project (2007 Friend of the Coast Award, April 2007)